

WASHINGTON, D.C. Yesterday in a vote of 306 to 97, the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 2844, the Continuity of Representation Act which establishes clear procedures for filling House Vacancies in the event that a significant number of Members become unable to serve due to a national emergency. The Bill resulted from growing concerns about the use of nuclear, biological, chemical and other weapons against the United States and the impact on the country should congress be targeted.

"While the topic may be difficult for us to consider, it would be irresponsible for us not to be prepared," said Congressman Bishop. "Terrorists have more than demonstrated their willingness to do us harm. And while we will invest every available resource into protecting the American people-including those of us who work in our nation's capital-we must consider the best interests of the United States. Terrorism will not bring down the U.S. government."

The bill specifically provides that once the Speaker of the House announces that more than 100 vacancies exist in the House of Representatives, states will have 45 days to hold special elections. By requiring elections-as opposed to allowing state governors to appoint replacements-the bill guarantees a functioning House of Representatives at the same time that it up-holds the long-standing constitutional tradition that only representatives elected by their constituents should serve in the House.

After passing the House of Representatives HR 2844 will move on to the Senate for approval.